

Background

The Substance Use Psychological Therapies team in [NHS Forth Valley](#) partnered with the [Forth Valley Recovery Community](#) (FVRC) in October 2020. This was in response to the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards which highlight the importance of positive relationships and social connection in people's recovery.

Two Recovery Development Workers were recruited to work in collaboration with the psychology team. Both workers are experienced in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Motivational Interviewing. They also have lived experience of substance use.

Impact

The Recovery Development Workers each have a consistent caseload of four or five people with sometimes a small waiting list. They meet regularly with their colleagues in the Substance Use Psychological Therapies team to review their cases and treatment plans.

Their aim is to support people in their recovery through practical day-to-day activities that move them closer to their planned goals. This could be, for example, by encouraging people to step out of their home, take a short walk, go for a bus ride, a coffee or join a walking group.

The team know that their treatment model is having an impact from the individual progress made by the people they have worked with. They have had a number of successes with people who have achieved their person goals and progressed in their recovery.

Learning

Partnership between the [Substance Use Psychological Therapies](#) and FVRC was developed in response to the fact that some people can struggle to put psychological learning into practice in between appointments, as a result of anxiety, trauma symptoms and lack of social supports. The MAT Standards provided them with the evidence and impetus they needed to secure funds for this project.

Top Tips

- Ideally Recovery Development Workers benefit from having both CBT skills and Motivational Interviewing training and lived experience of substance use.

- The Recovery Development Worker role is one of a role model and mentor and these attributes should be recognised.

Next Steps

The team know that their current staffing model lacks resilience and hope to address this by securing longer term funding and resources. They are also challenged by IT issues which currently limit the Recovery Development Workers' access to key records – this is also being addressed.